

Statewide  
Section II-RANGELAND, GRAZED FORESTLAND,  
NATIVE PASTURELAND INTERPRETATIONS

NE-SCS-AUGUST 1981

INTERPRETATIVE INFORMATION FOR  
RANGELAND AND GRAZABLE WOODLAND

INTRODUCTION

Rangeland is land on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential plant community) is predominantly grasses, grasslike plants, forbs or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use. Rangeland is a very important resource to Nebraska because it is the primary source of forage for domestic livestock (cattle and sheep). In addition, it provides . wildlife food and cover, water, areas of natural recycling of wastes, purification of air, recreation, and esthetic value.

Rangeland resource inventories are basically "ecosystem inventories." The ecosystems include not only vegetation and soils, but also the associated climate, water, and animals. The ecosystem components are closely and completely interrelated, including natural vegetation, precipitation, soil, temperature, air, fire, topography, exposure, and humans.

The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) through the range inventories, assists land users in identifying range sites and determining the present or ecological condition of their rangeland. The conservation practices or measures needed to maintain or improve the range condition are found in Section IV - Practice Standards and Specifications.

In addition, domestic livestock (cattle, sheep, horses, etc.) and deer may graze the herbaceous understory plants (grasses, grasslike plants, and forbs) in a woodland (forest) plant community, which is called GRAZABLE WOODLAND.

In Section II-RANGELAND, GRAZED FORESTLAND, NATIVE PASTURELAND INTERPRETATIONS, the following technical information related to Rangeland and Grazable Woodland is found:

I. Guide for Determining Range Condition and  
Suggestive Initial Stocking Rates

The guide will be used to determine the present range or ecological condition when developing a range resource plan. The steps to determine the range condition are as follows:

A. The SCS technician will select the correct range site(s) for each pasture to be inventoried. The range site(s) will be obtained from the County Soil Interpretation Guide, Section II-SOIL LEGENDS, of the Field Office Technical Guide.

B. The SCS technician will determine the plant community for each range site or partial for each pasture. The plant species for each range site or partial will be estimated in multiples of 5 percent. The plant species estimates are based upon total (unused) annual yield, air-dry.

C. Refer to Part A, Major Species in the Natural Plant Community (climax), for maximum percent allowable in climax for the range site. The total percent of plant species allowed for that range site or partial will determine the present range condition.

D. Refer to Part B, Suggestive Initial Stocking Rates, when user requests information on stocking rates. Caution should be exercised in the use of this information as there are many variables that affect forage production and stocking rates and they may vary from year to year. Proper Grazing use specifications in Section IV are the correct measure of determining proper use for a specific year.

## II. Nebraska Range Site Descriptions

The Nebraska Range Site Descriptions contain the following technical information:

### A. Physical Characteristics

1. Physiographic Features
2. Climatic Features
3. Potential Natural Vegetation (climax)
4. Total Annual Production
5. Soils
6. Range Site Type Location

### B. Major Uses and Interpretations For

### C. Field Office Distribution

## III. Total Annual Production in Excellent Range Condition

The information reflects the anticipated total average annual yield, air-dry, when range site is in excellent range condition. The information is shown as:

Table A. Total Annual Production in Excellent Range Condition, Pounds Per Acre, Air-Dry Weight

Table B. Total Annual Production in Excellent Range Condition, Kilograms Per Hectare, Air-Dry Weight

## IV. Abbreviated Range Site Descriptions

Abbreviated range site descriptions are to be used whenever rangeland is a recognized land use on the conservation plan map. The NE-CPA-5 (NB-CONS-5) SOILS INFORMATION form should be used to record this information. The plant species blanks should be filled in for the range sites shown on the conservation plan map. The species information may be obtained from the Nebraska Range Site Descriptions.

## V. Guide for Grazable Woodland (MLRAS 60 and 64)

Grazable Woodland is forest land that produces sufficient understory vegetation suitable for forage that can be grazed without significantly impairing wood production and other forest values. The guide contains suggestive initial stocking rate information for three woodland site index groups.